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SUNNYSIDE.



IRVING'S HOUSE AT SUNNYSIDE.

Great men in every age, like Plutarch's Heroes, appear
most conspicuous in the Home Circle.

A. Davis

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REPUBLIC STEAM PRESSES, 182 WASHINGTON STREET,

1860.

A VISIT

Aug 20/60

TO

SUNNYSIDE

IN THE LIFE TIME OF THE

“FATHER OF AMERICAN LITERATURE,”

BY A CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF

NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

AND FORMERLY CHAPLAIN OF THE SENATE OF NEW YORK, &c.

Asahel Davis

HIC AUCTOR EST PROPRIETAS OMNIUM GENTIUM.



BUFFALO:
REPUBLIC STEAM PRESSES, 182 WASHINGTON STREET, BUFFALO.

1860.

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A VISIT TO SUNNYSIDE.

The sun just rising on the path of the benighted traveler, is not more grateful than the light of knowledge to the darkened mind. It is vain to say we cannot stop in our pursuit "to make money" for a draught at the pure fountain of wisdom. For what would the treasures of "either Ind" avail unless guarded by the barriers that intelligence rears. Place the rich man amid the haunts of the barbarian, and how soon would all he held most dear be scattered to the four winds of heaven? All then who confess that "wisdom is the stability of our times," will cheerfully look into the "Home" of one, who, as a miscellaneous writer was the most resplendent luminary of any age.

If under a dark dispensation, Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, in presenting her sons could say, "these are my jewels," how much more reason has America to exhibit to the world in exultation those distinguished authors, whose productions are imbued with the spirit of Christianity. Among such, Irving is the most conspicuous, and as he began his labors mainly in England, our Father Land, justly deserves a portion of his merited fame. All enlightened nations delight to do him reverence. Wherever his writings have been read, the pulse of humanity beats in response to the fascinations of his diversified style. All classes who can appreciate worth in writing, rejoice in surveying the treasures the deep and pure fountain of his thoughts displays.

Anything relating to Washington Irving is interesting to thinking minds of all professions.

The needle does not more naturally vibrate to the pole than mankind desire to pay their devotions at the shrine of those once conspicuous in the various departments of life. Hence, the zeal, though misguided, to visit the birth and burial place of Mohammed, as well as the romantic banks of Avon, where once nature's great poet sang.

Long were we anxious to pay our respects to the Father of American Literature. Early one morning some years since, and while the sun ushered in one of the most lovely days of the year, we walked from Sing Sing to Tarrytown.

How enchanting the scenery along the banks of the Hudson. There nature, taste and wealth combine to perfect the beauty of the landscape.

The charms of this region also, are heightened from the many historic associations that cluster along the scene.

To the tourist, the banks of the Rhine are visited in anticipation of much delight from gazing on the castellated summits, hoary with age, but he finds that they have lost that freshness that greets the eye while surveying the lofty eminences covered with every variety of trees, the crystal cascades, the verdant lawns, the splendid mansions encircled with gardens, replete with all the varieties that the vegetable and floral kingdoms afford, as displayed along the bank of this noble stream.

If the Moors fancied Valencia, on account of its prominent beauty, was immediately under Heaven, who would not indulge as well a grounded supposition in favor of its locality over the scenery in this quarter?

As Cicero retired for study to his suburban villa Tusculum, so a galaxy of our citizens, distinguished as statesmen, artists, and literary men, have selected some of the most romantic spots along this grand stream to spend the remnant of their days, *cum dignitate et otio*, with dignity and ease.

Among such are Lindenwold, Cedar Lawn, Idlewild, &c.

How majestic rise those battlements called the Palisades.— These lofty columns of the trap rock seem to spring up as if to guard the stream from any of those fluctuations, which, like the

one at the Highlands, as supposed broke through the rocky ramparts, and rushed on as now in a new channel to the ocean. If the Germans, in reverence for the Rhine, call it Father or King Rhine, what shall we call the Hudson? We will call it, as Mr. Irving said it ever was to him, the "River of Delight."

If variety of scenery constitutes beauty, this characteristic is seen here on a large scale. Its night scenes, with stars setting behind the mountains, are most captivating.

If the poet Goethe, to give inspiration to his genius, filled his study with attractive specimens in art, so the beautiful and sublime objects in this vicinity, must inspire those writers who have chosen as their homes the banks of the Hudson, with fresh and profound thoughts.

One of the most interesting objects that attracted our notice in the suburbs of the north of Tarrytown, was the little Dutch Church. This edifice has been rendered famous, not only from the fact that in its consecrated walls Andre was incarcerated, as well as its being in the locality where the genius of Irving portrayed the exploits of "Ichabod Crane." Here was "Sleepy Hollow." This spot ever "breathed forth an atmosphere of dreams and fancies, infecting all the land."

Here are landmarks also of our country's history, that will never fade away from the discerning eye.

How soon did the bright visions of this young officer, who held a high place in the respect and affections of his countrymen, vanish after he had left Arnold at West Point!

As he left the quarters of one who had betrayed the interests of his country, in agreeing to surrender that important post, the key to the North, to the British, he moved on as with wings of hope to the South, little apprehending that his plot would soon be revealed by his rustic captors.

But who has not, like Washington, dropped a silent tear over the fate of one thus deluded and cut off in the morning of life? But we rejoice that the spirit of animosity that led to a fatal contest between parent and child, has died away under the in-

fluence of that spirit of amity that now characterizes both nations.

Were it not for the intervening eminence at Piermont, on the other side of Tappan Sea, you could see the place at old Tappantown, where Major Andre was hung.

Some years since the roots of a tree, that grew down into his coffin, were made into trinkets and sold.

The Dutch Church beside a silver sheet of water, and amid many rural objects, opens its charms as fresh to the observer as the modest flower springing up in the forest.

But what a perversion of taste in architecture, is the addition of its Portico of the Doric order. It reminds us of what we once saw in Bridgeport, Ct. The Portico of the Church was of the Doric order, but the capitals of its stately pillars were Ionic ! This house was erected by "Vredryck Flypsen, (Frederick Philips,) and Catherine, his wife, 1699. The ancient Communion Table, imported from Holland, graces the interior. On the bell is inscribed, *Si Deus, Pro Nobis Qui Contra Nos.* 1638.*

Truly, the divine favor has been specially extended to the Hollanders since they first settled on this river.

The next object of deep interest that won our notice, was the brook where Andre stopped to water his horse, at the time he was taken and held as a spy by the patriotic Paulding, Van Wart and Williams.

The rights of invaded Greece were often bought by Persian gold, but not so in this case. These men, true to the weal of their country, would not thus sell it for all the treasures and honors their captive promised them, if they would only let him pass on to the royal camp in New York.

Other landmarks of our country's history at that period, which "tried men's souls," may be effaced by the ravages of time, but this stream will remain to warble the patriots story, and the deed of one rendered dark, as contrary to honorable warfare, as long as the vapors and clouds of Heaven supply its source.

*If God be for us, who can be against us.

And here began the severest of Ichabods' trials in crossing the log bridge over this stream. He was on his way from the quilting at Van Tassels, the home of his blooming Katrina, and on his course to "Sleepy Hollow." Yes, as Irving says, it was at this identical spot that the unfortunate Andre was captured, and under the covert of those chestnuts and vines, were the sturdy yoemen concealed who surprised him. This has ever since been considered a haunted stream, and fearful are the feelings of the schoolboy who has to pass it after dark. Alas! on reaching this fatal stream, the terminus of Andre's fond hopes, in despair, well did he exclaim in the spirit of doomed Richard III,—"All I possess for a pass."

The bustling village of Tarrytown is more remarkable for the beauty of its locality than for the euphony of its name. Mr. Irving says, "there is a story in olden time that its name was given to it by the good housewives of the adjacent country, from the inveterate propensity of their husbands to linger about the village tavern on market days.

After spending a short time in Tarrytown, we hastened on South two miles, inspired with the pleasing desire to see one of Nature's great noblemen.

Sunnyside is about 23 miles north of New York, on the east side of the river.

It is said of Juno, that after wandering over her boundless realms, she found no place so delightful as Carthage. And here she fixed her chariot,—"Hic curru fuit." So with Irving, after having traveled over the most attractive portions of Europe, found no place as desirable for his future home as amid the scenes of his younger days. Well might he exclaim with Ulysses when speaking of his kingdom of Ithica.

"And none, ah! none so lovely to my sight,
Of all the lands that heaven o'erspread with light."

What virtuous mind does not love the country? There we see the attributes of Diety reflected from every object. And well might the devout Fenelon exclaim, "O my God, he who sees thee not in thy works has never seen anything!"

Who, that witnesses the charms of the opening year in the country, can prefer the dull monotony of the city? In the former the forest enlivened by "the birds that sing among the branches," the wild flowers that unfold their many colored petals to the prolific sun, as well as the broad fields presenting the promise of a luxuriant harvest, all conspire to perfect the scene. New prospects as the year advances, cheer the eye of all who love to enkindle their devotion at the altar of Nature.

The exercises of the country also are as promotive of health as of the increase of intellectual joys.

As Irving himself says, "As the leaves of trees are said to absorb all noxious qualities of the air, and to breathe forth a purer atmosphere, so it seems to me as if they drew from us all sordid and angry passions, and breathed forth peace and philanthropy."

We found Mr. Irving alone. His nieces who were his invaluable housekeepers, he said had just gone to the city. His favorite brother Ebenezer and his daughters, from whom fortune had fled, were gladly welcomed to the home of one as conspicuous for deeds of kindness as for his literary fame,

He ever found "in blessing blessed."

The fresh and brilliant glow of the kindly feelings imparted to his writings, is what renders them so universally captivating. Were they the phlegmatic productions of the Stoic, they would never amuse.

A cloud of gloom hangs over the writings of Milton, from the influence of that association of ideas that has such a powerful effect on the mind to please or otherwise. He said hatred towards a wife was sufficient cause for a divorce. St. Paul enjoins husbands to love their wives. If he did not obey this injunction, how can we think he knew anything by experience of the social joys so vividly portrayed in Eden.

Irving was once poor from the adverse fluctuations of business, but he soon recovered his fortunes by the magic influence of his pen. Then he could not be happy in the possession and use of his wealth alone. He gladly heightened his own joys by

inviting others less favored by the good things of this world, to share in their abundance.

How different the course of too many who are the mere turnkeys to their own palaces. They keep their property hoarded up and grasping it till at death, they can hold it no longer. Then they donate largely to some institution or relatives, and are heralded through the land for their charitable deeds. True benevolence is to give, like Irving in the day of health, and then, indeed, the giver sees the benefits he confers reflected upon his own heart, in warm and invigorating rays from the objects of his kindness.

In the flaming mine, there is no counterfeit coin. The *situ* of the ore is the locality where to find its genuineness, so it is with the character of men, if you wish to know this in its true phases, you must visit the fire sides of those called good and great.

As to Irving, although we had been captivated for years with the brilliancy of his style in writing, as well as with the information imparted by his historical works, yet we never saw his "great greatness," till we visited him in his rural home. He was as humble as a child, and as sociable as a brother, and such we found other great men, as Prescott and Audubon. Such men we can but love and respect.

The sayings of the wise and good, we instinctively treasure up as gems of rare value. We introduce several writers as they so much resemble Irving in displaying the graces of Christianity.

Our interview with Mr. Prescott was extremely pleasant.— At the time we saw him, he gave us his Autograph and remarked that then he wrote as with *half an eye!* He showed us his large Spanish MS., written legibly and without interlineations. For this rare volume he gave \$150! He said, formerly in Spain, strangers could not have access to libraries, but now they were open to all. Before we left, he said, on the top shelf of his library were objects worthy of notice. There lay in peaceful attitude, two swords, one mounted with silver, the other with brass, we think, and both as bright as the stars. One he said

was used at the battle of "Bunker Hill," by his grandfather, and the other by his wife's grandfather. The latter commanded a British vessel lying in the Mystic River. And he exclaimed, and while the cannon were roaring commemorative of the event, this day is the anniversary of the battle! We were in Boston. The celebration was at Bunker Hill. Such was the wonderful chapter of coincidences presented in the library of one called by Humboldt, the greatest historian in the world.

The remark of the illustrious Audubon evinces the great influence of *kindness* on those who could not be driven from the Everglades of Florida by an armed troop. Mr. Audubon said that during the Florida war, that his proper treatment of the Indians would give him a safe pass any where among them.—And that they were ever ready to throw at his feet, more game than he could use. The greatest Lexicographer of any age, observed to us, that on visiting Washington, very many Members of Congress confessed that he had been their teacher. Generations yet to come will rise up and call such men as those above blessed.

Although we are very fond of seeing houses built in the classic styles of architecture, yet, we confess, there is a fascination in the unique style of the old Dutch buildings, that renders them highly grateful to the eye. And such must have been the predilection of one whose towering genius throws our acquirements in the shade, as seen in his love for this peculiar mode of building.

In looking at his cottage, with acute angular roofs, we asked him what was its style of architecture. He briefly answered he thought it was a *perversion* of the Gothic.

How lovely the sight of wild flowers hid amid the dense underbrush of the forest, and so we find this little cottage in the midst of trees, shrubs and flowers of all hues. Nature seems to hold a holiday in gathering her varied productions to perfect the scenery around the unique mansion. But the presiding genius had attractions far greater than art or nature could afford.

We heard that Mr. Irving was reserved and diffident, but in

private, we saw none of these hindrances to the expansion of his social feelings. His only object was to gratify the curiosity of one who came from pure motives. It is said the great Spoiler of Europe fawned around mothers, that he thereby might induce them to use their influence with their sons in his behalf. But Irving was no sycophant, and those who never saw him may be assured they see his amiable character in his works. Like all great men, he was plain in his dress.

On visiting Mt. Vernon, we found it necessary to have various cicerones. An old black man conducted us through the garden and green house. A young mulatto woman took us to the tomb of Washington, and a very old colored woman led us through the mansion ; but not so at the "Roost." Its proprietor lost none of his dignity in showing us what was extremely attractive.

The many gables were adorned with weathercocks. The first we noticed was that on the South. It was an image of the proud courser. One that once stood in aerial height on the Vander Heyden Palace, Albany.*

We marvel not that he should have rescued from oblivion, this striking relic from this once conspicuous mansion, with two gable ends of acute angles, one he so conspicuously describes. It was erected 1728, and demolished in 1833. His house at Sunnyside is of the style of those named in his history by "Diedrich Knickerbocker," with the exception that the former was stuccoed in white, we presume on stone. He remarks, the houses of the higher classes were generally constructed of wood, excepting the gable end, which was of small black and yellow Dutch bricks, and always faced on the streets. The date of the erection was curiously designated by iron figures on the front, and on the top of the roof was perched a fierce little weather-cock, to let the family into the important secret which way the

* We formerly attended funerals at this venerable house, standing where now rises in splendor the Baptist Church, North Pearl street, and when it was customary to receive old and choice wines, scarfs and gloves on such occasions. The wealthy burghers kept wines a long number of years, in anticipation of their death !

wind blew; the most staunch and loyal citizens, however, always went according to the weathercock on the top of the Governor's house, which was certainly the most correct, as he had a trusty servant employed every morning to climb up and point it which ever way the wind blew."

But the most striking of this class, and one of bird form, was that which once proudly plumed his burnished wings on the "Stadt House," in the days of Petrus Stuyvesant. This was the first house of the kind built in what is now the "Empire State." It stood on the west side of Pearl street, at the head of Coventies Slip, New York.

This rare relic was sent by the ladies as a present to Mr. Irving. They were probably aware that he wished to have things around him in keeping with his antiquated house, and the style of his history of "Nieuw Nederlandts." He told us that this heavy emblem of the fashion of other times had blown down from its perch, but that it should again resume its former position. As knights of yore kept their trophies in Baronial Halls, so this was exhibited in his parlor; but whether it ever again attained the honor of facing the winds, we know not, but this we *do know*, that he ultimately gave it to the St. Nicholas Society, New York.

It traveled from city to city, as did the *bronze horses* of Constantinople, but it was sent by very different motives, by those who controled its movements.

This distinguished association, guard this precious gift as closely from harm as did the ancient Trojans their coelestial Palladium. It is held secure from profane touch as in the very adytum of their archives.

Among the various lectures we gave in New York, none, perhaps, received the attention of that on the "Times of the Dutch Governors." Then one of the Stuyvesant family kindly sent to us, for exhibition to a large and highly respectable audience, a *pear* preserved in a jar, that grew on the tree in 3rd Avenue, New York, planted over 200 years since, by Gov.

Stuyvesant, but some of the officers of St. Nicholas Society were unwilling to loan the above relic for the occasion. This tree at last account was in bearing condition.

Why is it that we have such a veneration for mementoes of earlier days? We are delighted in wandering over the ocean prairies where all things appear as fresh and fair as in the "world's first spring;" but we feel a deeper interest in surveying the mounds that tell of intelligent races who lived West when time was young. So such relics as we saw at Sunnyside, leave a more powerful influence on the mind, than all other objects of more recent date. And such is the impression, antiquities have on the mind that the most gifted intellects of either continent, are engaged in Ethnological studies.

Henry Clay stated to the Senate of the United States, that he had a broken vessel, a goblet once used by Washington, and which he valued above price.

Our readers will excuse the digression, when we state we have before us a piece of the arch under which Washington marched on his way to be inaugurated as President, in New York, 1789. At the time we were in Trenton city, the relict of Rev. W. Armstrong, Chaplain to Washington, lived in the city. She was one of the matrons on that occasion; and among the young ladies who strewed the path of the hero with flowers, is one hereby announced.

Mrs. Mary Chesnut, mother of the Senator from South Carolina, has been appointed Vice Regent of the Mount Vernon Association of that State. She is eighty-five years of age, and had a personal acquaintance with General Washington. In the spring of 1789, Washington visited Trenton, and was received with the most enthusiastic demonstrations by the people, especially by the ladies. A "triumphal arch" was erected on the bridge over the Assanpink creek, at the entrance of which the young girls strewed flowers before him and sang a song of welcome. One of those girls is now Mrs. Chestnut.

Irving's fondness for the antique was seen, not only in the objects scattered around "Wolfert's Roost," but in his vivid and picturesque description of the ruins of the Alhambra. How fascinating the scenes in the plain of Vega. There the beautiful vale, watered by the Darro, and all the rich variety of vale and mountain that surrounds Grenada, render it an earthly paradise. But his description is most fascinating, of the splendid remains of Moorish architecture; buildings with mosaic cupolas, gorgeously painted in gold and azure, basins of marble, the alabaster vase, supported by lions, dry and dusty fountains that had once thrown up sparkling showers, marble urns, mutilated statues, overturned and buried among weeds and wild flowers.

As even the shattered oak adds interest to the wide landscape, so many of his most beautiful scenes are rendered more attractive by the sombre tints drawn from the ravages of time. Yes, and to this lover of history, the few faint rays of light that glimmer in the night of early ages, were more attractive than the most fascinating effulgence shed over the writings of misguided genius.

We may say of Irving, as a distinguished tourist says of Sir Walter Scott, by his pen "he illuminated every place which he touched, in a word he made alive every object he described, and his genius has given life to all these memorials of departed centuries."

And well does this writer remark, to pass by Melrose Abbey, and the house of Scott, at Abbotsford, would be like a traveler going from Rochester to Buffalo, without turning aside to look at Niagara. Who then would pass by unnoticed, a spot equally interesting—that where Irving lived?

Over the mantel, was a painting of deep interest, and one he obtained in England, of a young artist, for a few guineas. It represented Gov. Stuyvesant, with his gallant force of 700 men, in the midst of that battle, when, in 1655, he drove away the Swedes from the shores of South or Delaware River.

How delighted was Mr. Irving to find unexpectedly in a foreign land, an artistic display on canvass, of a scene he so facetiously describes.

If music "hath charms to tame the savage heart," it inspires the warrior with increased courage and vigor on the embattled field. So thought the Governor's intrepid trumpeter, Anthony Van Corlear, on this occasion ; for near his "Magnus Appollo," he stands blowing his trumpet as if he would move heaven and earth by its sonorous notes.

Rising and his pathy troops, could not withstand this inspired phalanx. O ! how animated was Mr. Irving in pointing to this striking representation of a scene so imitatively delineated by his fertile and vivid imagination. It seems now as if he were still at our side pointing out the attractions of a painting, he must have valued above any of those of the greatest schools of art, in design at least.

His estimation of the production of the young artist must have been in proportion to its accuracy of display of the outlines of the scene whence it was drawn. Let us see from his own pen some of these. Such were the mighty events at Fort Christina.

"The immortal deities who whilom had seen service at the "affair" of Troy, now mounted their feather bed clouds, and sailed over the plain, or mingled among the combatants in different disguises. Jupiter sent off his thunderbolt to a noted coppersmith, to have it polished for the direful occasion. All was silent hoiror, or bustling preparation ; war reared his horrid front, gnashing loud his iron fangs, and shook his direful crest of bristling bayonets. And now the mighty chieftains marshalled out their hosts. Here stood stout Rising, firm as a thousand rocks. His artillery consisted of two swivels and a caronade. His valiant infantry lined the breast work in grim array, each having his mustachios fiercely greased, and his hair pomatumed back, and qued so stiffly that he grinned above the ramparts like a grizly death's head.

Then came on the intrepid Hard-kopping Pict, his brows knit, his teeth clenched, his breath held hard, rushing on like ten thousand bulls of Bashan. His faithful squire, Van Corlear, trudged valiently at his heels, with his trumpet gorgeously bedecked with red and yellow ribbands, the remenibrances of his fair mistresses at Manhattoes. Then came on his sturdy comrades, swarming like the Myrmydoms of Achilles. There were the Van Wycks, and the Van Dycks, and the Ten Eycks, the Van Warts, the Van Winkles, &c., &c."

Petrus with a little sturdy stone pottle, leveled to the dust the gigantic Swede. "His fall was the signal of defeat and victory." The Swedes gave way, the Dutch pressed forward, the former took to their heels, the latter hotly pursued. Thus, in a little while, the impregnable fortress of Fort Christina, which, like another Troy, had stood a seige of full ten hours, was finally carried by assault, without the loss of a single man on either side.

It was universally declared by all the writers whom Stuyvesant hired to write the history of his expedition, that on this memorable day he had gained a sufficient quantity of glory to immortalize a dozen of the greatest heroes of Christendom.

We left the room after surveying this representation of war, to see in the adjoining one a relic of him "who was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hands of his countrymen." This was a pair of "green glasses," once used by Washington. By one who, while he was but a babe, imparted to him his blessing in humble prayer. His nurse exclaims, "here's a bairn that was named after ye." This was in a shop in Broadway, New York.

This reminds us of an old nurse upwards of 90 years old, when we knew her, and who lived in the house in which she was born, Portsmouth, N. H., who placed Capt. Storer, U. S. N., when an infant, in Washington's arms, when on a visit to that place. Nurses, as well as heroes, must show their ambition.

Ah, little then did that great and good man think that this little one to whom he imparted a patriarch's blessing, would close his labor, as the great Magician of the western continent, in writing his biography.

The weathercock left to an illustrious Association, was a memento of that stern Governor, who once presided in that antiquated Hall, the seat of justice. This he highly esteemed, but his preference was for the relic of more recent date ; because it was a souvenir of one, whose virtues were in his apprehension, superior to those of the hero of New Amsterdam. Were Irving the "meanest, as well as the greatest of mankind," we could not respect or love him. But as he took the example of one, whose relic he esteemed above all others, in his rural home, and from the fact that he considered the character of Washington pre-eminent in all that ennobles man, we give to him our warmest affections, and we trust we portray not in vain to the youth of our country, the eminent virtues of one, whose example as they march over the wide fields of life, will be like the Polar Star to the bewildered traveler at night, a sure guide.

Irving was sensible of the influence "of example for weal or for wo," when he remarks that, that of Witiza made all Spain to sin. He sought for knowledge to enrich his works from every department of the grand storehouse of creation. How often was the fire of his genius enkindled on the altar of nature. "The works of the Lord are great, and sought out of all those that have pleasure therein." Such did he indeed seek, and select the most beautiful to heighten the native charms of his retreat.

At the east side of his cottage was a beautiful shrub, transplanted from "Melrose Abbey." This, we presume, called the ivy, has been diffused by culture all over his grounds. There, truly, amid pure fountains and groves, vocal with nature's songsters,

"The intellectual power,
On the mind's throne, suspends his graver cares,
And smiles."

How common to eulogize the great patriot of Rome, who, after conquering the enemies of the Republic, retired to the cul-

ture of his farm. But behold, one far more conspicuous than he, for while Cincinnatus sought retirement after the slaughter of his fellow men, Irving left the wide fields of literature, where he had long been subduing the weeds of ignorance and vice, to find repose in the shades of rural life. He, however, renewed vigorously his scientific labors in retirement.

What a change in public sentiment, as relates to farming since Virgil wrote his Georgics? Then the pursuit was rather disreputable. But now, here, as in England, Agriculture is considered as the chief interest of the country, and gentlemen of the highest standing and education, political influence and wealth, take a direct and personal interest in it.

How striking the remarks of Bryant in his Agricultural ode:—

Far back in the ages,
The plough with wreaths was crowned ;
The hand of kings and sages,
Entwined the chaplet round.

Honour waits, o'er all the earth
Through endless generations ;
The act that calls the harvest forth,
And feeds the expectant nations.

Mr. Irving told us it was one of the happiest circumstances of his life, that he had come to cultivate his farm of some 20 acres, for, says he, by farming exercise I have recovered my health. He drove his own team when he took us in his carriage. His glory was work, both physical and intellectual.

Alas! for the want of exercise, too many of both sexes engaged in study lose their health. Many are like the students the late Dr. Dwight, of Yale, alluded to, when he said, it was the most difficult task to get scholars to exercise.

Ah! if happiness is our being's end and aim, exercise is one grand means of attaining the destined goal. To recover health, well do we recollect that one of our now prominent Bishops, once went *on foot* from Schenectady to Niagara Falls. For the attaining and preservation of health, other observances also are requisite, as due attention to diet.

As we were strolling along the banks of that lovely brook, filled with ducks of all colors, we at length stopped at the *twin*

trees, where, like Isaac, he often came to meditate. There we asked him what were his habits as to diet.

We asked the question moreover, from the fact that many suppose literary men should be more particular as to their food, than other classes. He replied, "I eat what is set before me." Would that all would obey the Apostolical injunction.

Alas! how many destroy their health by taking their food, and that of particular kinds, with all the precision they would take medicine. Man is an omnivorous animal, and he should use all kinds of food with moderation. We recollect that at the height of the rage to adopt the Graham System, a lady of East Cambridge, Mass., remarked that there were quite a number in the Insane Asylum, who were made inmates from destroying their health and reason by this unnatural system of Hygiene!

And while the fertile imagination of Irving enveloped Communipaw in dense clouds of tobacco smoke, which thereby saved it from the assaults of the invading foe, made one of the Dutch Governor's evince his anger by the rapid movements of his short pipe, and the amorous boor to seek the affection of his "lady love," by enveloping her in the fumes of his pipe, we had the curiosity to ask him if he was fond of imitating his heroes. He replied, "I do not smoke."

It is said the burlesque of Cervantes, against Chivalry as personated in Don Quixote, proved its downfall; but such was not the result of Irving's satires on the use of tobacco, for in one year its use in New York city amounted to \$5,840,000.

This weed so indispensable to the repose of Irving's array of worthies, was employed in a manner in the old dominion, as to have been a fit subject, also for his burlesque pen,—whether thus employed for that locality we know not.

There, in earlier times, the young men depended upon the importation of females from the other side of the Atlantic for wives, and as soon as they arrived, not under the necessity of achieving glory, in feats of "tilt and tournament," to secure the fairest, they purchased such in paying from 100 to 150 lbs. of tobacco for each!

If so many uses have been made of the plant, we wonder not that the most remarkable writer known, in burlesque style, should have so often amused his readers by the keen shafts of ridicule in regard to its use.

Who does not love to read the account of the talented and lamented Carter, of a visit to the farm of Lafayette, about 40 miles east of Paris !

This circular farm of 500 acres has the venerable chateau in the centre, surrounded with fosse. If this was once the home of the Baron of Feudal times, whose business was war, it latterly was the quiet one of the illustrious farmer, and Mr. C., found the patriot of both hemispheres, amusing himself in making a "pig sty."

So Mr. Irving took us into his yard and showed us his choice selections of poultry. With his own hands he took up the largest hen we ever saw, for our own special observation ; and he said, from his own poultry yard, he had between three and four thousand eggs yearly.

Mr. Irving was a practical man, and he must have thought with Washington, that "whatever was worth doing, should be done well." Order, elegance and beauty, pervaded all parts of his little domain.

His desire to excel even in rural pursuits, is imitated by very many of our first gentlemen here and elsewhere.

"Employment," as Paley says, is everything. To be happy, the mind and body must be engaged in some useful pursuit.

The Roman Emperors were so convinced of this fact, that after the empire became mistress of the world, to keep soldiers out of the excesses to which idleness leads, opened various avenues of amusement.

In going through our cities, founded by the Dutch, it is rather a melancholy reflection that so few of those old houses are left that impress the mind as indices of the Knickerbocker character.



* IRVING'S HOUSE AT SUNNYSIDE.

But the cottage at Sunnyside is the oldest of this class in the State. We presume, from its connexion with one so eminent in the ranks of literature, it will long escape the ravages of improvement, "Procul hoste!" This humble dwelling is far more worthy of preservation than that of the bard of Avon,—as works of instruction and amusement are far more important than the mere histrioric. The Kaaba, or "sacred house" of Mahommed, enshrined in the great Mosque at Mecca, the Musulmen suppose was built by angels, but no such supposition is attached to the origin of Wolfert's Roost.

It was successively inhabited by the ruder class, long before it was improved and occupied by its last owner.

"The base degenerate iron offspring ends,
A golden progeny from heaven descends."

* The above representation of the Roost was executed by W. J. Mitchell, Buffalo. Its artistic outlines show his superiority as an artist.

Here once lived Wolfert Acker, privy counsellor to Governor Stuyvesant, and from him whose motto was "lust and rust," (ease and good,) and which was afterwards corrupted to "Roost." And here once lived Van Tassel. He lived in the times of the Revolution, and was a staunch rebel. This region, was in fact, the neutral ground between the British in the South, and the Colonists in the North. It was the grand marauding arena, where were the exploits of the skinners and cow boys, claiming to serve respectively under the flags of either power. The "Roost," on coming next into the possession of Mr. Irving, was called "Sunnyside."

We presume he gave a name to his new home, that in itself, as well as all surrounding objects, would reflect his dominant habit cheerfulness. That smile ever generated by living under the fostering care of heaven, and the loveliness of creation, was always reflected on all around.

We might as well think of adding perfume to the rose, as to attempt to add fresh honors to Irving, by any remarks we can make. We gave him one of our small productions, and told him we thought it but a drop from the ocean of our gratitude.

His writings are like the atmosphere we inhale, the property and admiration of all nations who can appreciate what is beautiful, and instructive in style.

We can only say, we have had many long hours beguiled of their weariness, by the "ease and grace of his mellow, flowing, and softly tinted style."

The father of Mr. Irving was from Scotland, and his mother was an English lady. He was born in New York, in a house that once stood corner of William and Fulton streets. He was born April 3rd, 1783, and died in November, 1859.

As with him, so all things change.

Now, the works of art, as the Rail Road in the West, and Croton Water Works in the East, have marred the beauty of the scene. The latter he considered the greatest work of the kind in the world.

In all coming time, how great must be the number of pilgrims to a place once the happy home of one whom all nations respect and love. And they

The name of Irving oft inscribed shall see,
In every grove and every vocal tree.

But alas! that sun that animated this enchanting spot, has set to rise in fairer and immortal climes; but still his beams linger as on the mountain tops, to cheer all who once beheld in rapture his noon day glory.

And here we are reminded of the honor our government has won to itself, in having employed such men as Irving in the first embassies to foreign courts. It shows a due appreciation of the importance of knowledge. Intelligence, indeed, is the grand foundation of our glorious Republic. Where this is wanting in the countries South, the waves of anarchy are perpetually desolating some of the fairest portions of the earth.

As Washington was the political, as has been well said, so is his namesake, the literary Father of his Country. Yes, and we hope the commemoration of the birth day of the latter will be continuous with that of the former.

For what is liberty without light? Is not intelligence the life of liberty.

We may as well forsake gratitude, love and truth, as to forget those virtues that still shine on earth, and even to where all intellectual light and good eminate.

And we rejoice that the New York Historical Society, lately celebrated with appropriate ceremonies, the birth of Irving.

We cannot close our work as appropriately as by an extract from Wm. Cullen Bryant's eulogy on Mr. Irving :

“ I have thus set before you, my friends, with such measures of ability as I possess, a rapid and imperfect sketch of the life and genius of Washington Irving. Other hands will yet give the world a bolder, more vivid and exact, a more distinctive portraiture. In the meantime, when I consider for how many years he stood before the world as an author, with a still increasing fame—half a century in this most changeful of centuries—I

cannot hesitate to predict for him a deathless renown. Since he began to write, empires have risen and passed away; mighty captains have appeared on the stage of the world, performed their part, and been called to their account; wars have been fought and ended, which have changed the destinies of the human race. New arts have been invented and adopted, and have pushed the old out of use; the household economy of half mankind has undergone a revolution. Science has learned a new dialect and forgotten the old; the chemist of 1800 would be a vain babbler among his brethren of the present day, and would in turn become bewildered in the attempt to understand them. Nation utters speech to nation in the words that pass from realm to realm with the speed of light. Distant countries have been made neighbors; the Atlantic ocean has become a narrow frith, and the Old World and New shake hands across it; the East and West look it at each other's windows. In his pages we see that the language of the heart never becomes obsolete; that Truth and Good and Beauty, the offspring of God, are not subject to the changes which beset the inventions of men.

If it were becoming at this time, and in this assembly, to address our departed friend as if in his immediate presence, I would say: "Farewell, thou who hast entered into the rest prepared, from the foundation of the world, for serene and gentle spirits like thine. Farewell, happy in thy life, happy in thy death, happier in the reward to which that death was the assured passage; fortunate in attracting the admiration of the world to thy beautiful writings; still more fortunate in having written nothing which did not tend to promote the reign of magnanimous forbearance and generous sympathies among thy fellow men. The brightness of that enduring fame which thou hast won on earth is but a shadowy symbol of that glory to which thou hast been admitted in the world beyond the grave. Thy errand upon earth was an errand of peace and good will to man, and thou art now in a region where hatred and strife never enter, and where the harmonious activity of those who inhabit it, acknowledges no impulse less noble or less pure than that of love."

20 Aug 1860.



REFERENCES.

Strangers to the Author's former works, may judge by the following references of what they may expect from the present one.

NEW YORK, MARCH 31, 1847.

The subscriber having heard, with much pleasure, the Lectures on "Antiquities of America," delivered by Professor DAVIS, before the Pupils, Teachers and Professors of our Seminary, cheerfully recommends the same to the citizens of this city.

J. F. SCHROEDER,

Rector of St. Ann's Hall.

We are also happy in joining in the above recommendation.

Hon. JOHN DUER,

Hon. MURRAY HOFFMAN,

Maj. Gen. EDMUND P. GAINES, STEPHEN H. TYNG, D. D.
GARDINER SPRING, D. D. HENRY P. TAPPAN, D. D.

—
NEW YORK, JUNE 9, 1846.

The Principal and Pupils of Mr. Charles Candee's Boarding School, (LaFayette Place,) were highly gratified in hearing the eloquent and instructive Lecture of Professor DAVIS, "Corresponding Member of the N. Y. Historical Society." We highly recommend him to the attention of other Institutions.

CHARLES CANDEE.

VIRGINIA OLIVIA, Mobile Alabama,
MARIGUATA RODRIGUAS, Buenos Ayres.
ANGELITA TRACY, Lima, Peru.
CHARLOTTE ANTHON, New York.

And forty-six others.

—
PHILADELPHIA, DEC. 7, 1839.

SIR:—I attended, a few days since, your Lectures in this city, "On the Discovery by the Northmen," and derived great pleasure from the same.

Being by birth a Northman, and having for some years studied many of the old Icelandic documents concerning this interesting subject, I hesitate not to say that your Lecture is compiled with much care and labor, and cannot but be interesting and instructive to all persons.

Your obedient servant,

C. D. ARFWEDSON,
U. S. Consul at Stockholm.

—
From Mrs. Willard, of Troy.

"Mr. DAVIS has delivered an interesting and instructive Lecture, relating to the history of our country, to members of the Troy Female Seminary."

—
From the late distinguished Ornithologist.

I have read the "Antiquities of Central America, and the Discovery of New England by the Northmen five hundred years before Columbus," by A. DAVIS, with extreme pleasure and satisfaction; and I feel much indebted to that learned gentleman for all that he has said on this most interesting subject, in his memorable lecture above mentioned, and I trust that it will be as highly appreciated by all who peruse it as by myself. I take this opportunity to offer to Mr. DAVIS my sincere thanks for his goodness to me, and have great pleasure in subscribing myself his friend and respectful humble servant.

JOHN J. AUDUBON.

To A. DAVIS, formerly Chaplain of the Senate, &c., N. Y.

—
From Major Gen. Jesup, U. S. A.

I have attended the Lecture of Rev. Mr. DAVIS, on the "Discovery of America by the Northmen," with much pleasure and profit; and I respectfully recommend him to the patronage of teachers, and of the public generally.

WASHINGTON CITY, MAR. 23, 1840.

THOMAS S. JESUP

Professor A. DAVIS, of Buffalo, who some years since lectured before a very distinguished audience in this city, on the "Antiquities of America," proposes to deliver a lecture on the great discoveries lately made in the Eastern Continent, as at Babylon, Nineveh, Persia, &c. The former success of Professor DAVIS in this city, and the very high estimation in which he is held by the literary and scientific circles of New York and other principal American cities, will be his best introduction to our readers.—*Toronto Daily Patriot, March 27, 1851.*

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